

I give her mornings and bedtime in apple juice more potent to her 70 pounds than a \$100 heroin hit to a prickled L.A. hype.

Sad and ashamed of her addiction as much as her disease, sometimes she weeps as she sucks through a straw the last drop of morphine from the cup, and sometimes I imagine Deukmejian and the DEA boys breaking down my mother's bedroom door — conquistadores roaring "Eureka!" — coming to prick their spears at us, a couple pagans all right, red-eyed and doped-up, naked with sin and death.

SUBSEQUENCE

My prospective employer asks me about the 3 years on my job app that I didn't work, instead took care of my dying, bedridden mother, and he frowns, suspicious that I am lazy as well as unskilled on Wordstar and Word Perfect, my job duties as nurse and nurturer of no use to him, nor that I learned to butter toast to the edges, just so, and then cut bite-size for her, nor that I perfected cream and barley soups to add fat to her tiny bones, came to know Duoderm, decubitus ulcers, catheters, and morphine, and developed my communication skills so as to articulate with paramedics and intensive-care personnel.

Once I ran the mile in a minute when I heard the hospital intercom cry "Code Blue!" to find where she lay inside the CAT Scan, but my prospective employer wants someone quicker who can field invoices, push paper into their proper pink, green, and goldenrod places, catch faxes and the phones, then slide safe into home after the grand slam.

Next time, I will lie on my job app and resume, make up some made-up

employer for those 3 years.
These businesses aren't running
some rest home.

FEMALE MUD WRESTLING

The middle eastern woman working in the postal service outpost in the back of her husband's pizza place wears enough gold around her wrists and neck to buy a lemon grove in San Diego. She's too rich and beautiful to work here and lets me know by walking slowly instead of saying I'll be right there when I ding the bell; she quibbles with me over 4th class book rate, shakes my Xmas packages for potential rock and rolling dope and uzis and refuses to insure them because of the tape I used. Because she's so rich and beautiful, she holds up her nose while she eyes my jeans and old Dodge I park next to her new Cadillac, and does not tell me to have a nice day when I walk away. In her country, she knows, that with my beady eyes and narrow hips, I wouldn't have married well there either, probably to some stinky Bedouin cheesemaker who'd kowtow and hah-so to her pizza- and falafel-making husband coming to buy his feta and tahini. I dislike female fights for human status, wrestling in the haute-coutured and French-parfumed mud some husbands buy. It sullies our sisterhood. Impedes clitoral growth. But if I ever get the chance, I'd like to spill pomegranate juice all over her white Anne Klein, and cram a little spanakopita up her aquiline, peasant-pshaw-ing nose.

ORGANIC ORCHARD

This summer I had to fight for the right to my own peaches from a horde of Genghis Khan beetles bivouacked in the highest branches of my tree, glistening in the sun like emeralds or scum. Armored